The Arithmetic Of Friendship



Amos R. Wells

THE ARITHMETIC OF FRIENDSHIP

1 + 1 = 4

By Amos R. Wells



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THE RARE ART OF MAKING FRIENDS

CHAPTER I

FRIENDSHIP is the greatest thing that can enter any life, because nothing else can so broaden a life. It doubles, at least, the value of a soul, to itself, to others, and to God. Thus it justifies my arithmetic, "1+1=4."

This great thing, like all other great things, is brought about; it does not merely happen. Common speech is right when it talks about "making friends"; it would not be right if it talked about "chancing upon friends."

Therefore no one is to sit down and whine because he or she has no friends. Bestir yourself! Friends can be made, because friendship does not depend upon an accident: not on the accident of beauty, not on the accidents of wealth and rank, not on anything that

is out of your own control. Friendship depends on one thing alone, on character. And because you can make character you can make friends.

In this beautiful business of making friends the factory is daily life—common, daily life. The broader your life, the more human interests you touch, the larger is your plant, and the more productive is your friendship factory.

It is not only your social life, so called, that affords opportunities for friendship. Your business also may form its circle of friends. Politics may give you another circle. Reforms may introduce you to still another company, and a noble one. Your church life may make for you many more friends. Your recreation and hobbies are additional meeting grounds.

If your interests are narrow in range and lack intensity, you are cutting down your factory facilities, you are sadly restricting your friendship plant.

Get out into the world! Friendships are made there. Do things! Do many things! Do them ardently! Your comrades in effort will become your firmest friends. Confined to a sick room, you may yet get out into the world, and enter many splendid activities. It is not of the body that we are speaking, but of the outreaching, indomitable, friendly soul.

For your apprenticeship in the making of friends, watch those who are plainly skillful in the art, and see how they do it. Admire them. Then make friends in your way, not theirs.

In this making of friends there are some tools that everyone needs. The chief of these is unselfishness. It is as absurd to try to make friends without unselfishness as to make pictures without a brush or a house without a saw. Lives lived for others become allied to others. Every sacrifice of self is a gain to friendship. Shar-

ing is almost synonymous with friendship.

Therefore if you are ambitious to have a friend, drill yourself assiduously in unselfishness. Note how long you can go without thinking of your own interests. Note how thoroughly you can merge yourself in another's happiness or grief or enterprises. Note whether your thoughts when you are alone tend to yourself or to others. And by all these tests judge of your fitness for friendship.

In our making of friendship the companion tool of unselfishness is humility. Pride is ignorant of friendship. Friendship is need, and pride knows no need. If you have a friend you do not think how you are looking, talking, acting; you think of the words and deeds and the beloved face of your friend. If you would gain a friend it is as disastrous to be self-conscious as to be selfish, for self-consciousness puts

you at your very worst. For the making of friends the first rule is, Remember others; and the second rule is, Forget yourself.

Human interest is the third tool in our friendship factory. The genius of friendship dwells in little things. All art magnifies the seeming trifles of life, and the art of friendship has to do preëminently with what unfriendly men are likely to neglect as trivial.

If you scorn small talk, homely inquiries after health, commonplace felicitations on the weather; if you cannot remember names and faces, or the facts of employment and marriage and births and deaths; if you take no note of anniversaries and festivals; if crowds annoy you and parlors bore you; then you may hail men grandly in rare approach as of a comet, but you cannot dwell with a friend as a satellite. True, a friend has been wisely defined as some one with whom you can be silent

yet unembarrassed; but that unconstrained silence is the shining fruit of many rustling words.

The last tool in the making of a friend is courage. Being unselfish, being humble, being interested in other lives, dare to enter them! Set forth as a Columbus on the bright ocean of friendliness. It is an enterprise worthy of all your best. Is some one wronged? Is some one in danger? Is some one afraid or perplexed, sad or discouraged? Then be a friend before you have a friend! Carry your heart to the need, and test it there. Prove whether or not you have strength for two, wisdom and cheer for two. Learn whether you are ready for friendship, or must fill up still higher your reservoir of character.

And know that, if you deserve a friend, and if you thus humbly and unselfishly dare, you shall have a friend, and many friends. The way is simple; do you call it hard?

CERTAIN LIMITATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP

CHAPTER II



RIENDSHIP is a thing so beautiful that even a little flaw is a disaster. We have a right to expect wonders from friendship; and a disappointment, though a trifling one, is liable to spoil the whole. It is important, therefore, not to seek in friendship what it cannot give, or anticipate from it more than it is able to perform. A friendship may be perfect, and yet it is not omnipotent; just as a pen, even a fountain pen, may be an ideal instrument, yet be utterly unable to paint a Sistine Madonna.

In the first glow of friendship the entire world becomes rose color. We are completely satisfied with our newfound joy. We want to see no one but our friend, and we want to see our friend all the time. We can imagine

no difficulty that this blessed friendship will not surmount. With it we are ready to confront every demon, and we fancy that even the angels envy us.

Perhaps slowly, perhaps with tragic suddenness, the disillusion comes. You see the faults and sins of your friend. He is far from perfect. Friendship is unselfishness, and he has streaks of self-seeking. Friendship is humility, and he is occasionally boastful and self-conscious. Friendship is helpfulness, and he asks for help more often than he gives it. Friendship is interest in others, and he likes to talk of himself more than of you. Perhaps there is a quarrel. Perhaps you quietly drift apart. In either case you are ready to say of friendship, the best thing in the world, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

This result is common enough, but it is all the more deplorable; and it

may be avoided by the preliminary exercise of a little common sense.

Remember, while you are making friends, that you are not remaking human nature.

Remember, while you are so conscious of your friend's faults, that he is doubtless quite as conscious of yours.

Remember that though a gnat may spring forth fully formed and perfect, a human being is years in developing its powers; and the finer and stronger any element of your life is to become, the longer it will be in perfecting its fineness and strength.

Remember that it is only in fairy tales that a sword flashes into a ladder and the ladder into a purse of gold; in plain, homely life an instrument is good for only its one task, and for other tasks you must get other instruments. There is no magic in friendship that will enable it, for instance, to take the place of business sagacity.

"But," you are asking, "does not your very subtitle convey an assurance of magic? If 1+1=4, if the joining of friend to friend doubles the resources and powers of each, are we not justified in eager expectations?"

Yes, but not justified in expecting impossibilities. 1+1=4, but it does not equal infinity. Friendship exalts character, but it does not at once transform faulty human beings into angels. Friendship multiplies powers, but it does not gift us with superhuman characteristics. It is hard enough to be even a little unselfish; friendship renders us less and less self-seeking, more and more devoted to others, but it does not work the wonder with a "presto, change!" It is hard enough, even with a friend, to be wise and strong; friendship adds to our wisdom and strength, but it has no "open sesame" to all the treasuries of heaven.

Enter a friendship, therefore, with

the expectation of being disappointed. You will be disappointed less than you fear. Allow friendship to surprise you pleasantly. Do not make such heavy demands upon the bank of friendship as to overdraw your account. If you are sensible, your balance there will grow with delightful and steady rapidity.

Friends, in the first ardor of their happy experience, quite invariably require too much time of each other, and too much interest. Your friend has other friends; you would not care for him if he were not friendly. He has other duties than even the high duty of friendship. He has other pleasures that attract him, and give him new zest for the surpassing pleasure of friendship. The crown of friendship possesses more than a single gem.

The highest type of friendship, therefore, is stoical rather than epicurean. Each friend is superbly willing to get

along without his friend. Each friend magnificently trusts his friend to go his own way. There is no better compliment than this, to be serenely sure of another soul, so sure that you no longer need, though you richly enjoy, the evidence of sight and hearing. This is not the bachelor's degree of friendship; it is the doctor's degree, and it worthily wears the scarlet hood.

There is much truth, then, in the statement that the less need of friendship you have, the more you will get out of friendship. To him that hath shall be given, to the fullest lakes the brimming streams, to the characters that are most sturdily independent the finest enrichment from other lives.

Friendship will not do the work of hard study, of industrious application, of vigorous enterprise, of mental acumen, of prudent foreseeing; it will do only its own work. That work is the intensifying, the exaltation, of all other

qualities and abilities and opportunities. Friendship is not the image, but the gold foil upon it. Friendship is not the locomotive, but the steam in the boiler. Friendship is not the work of life, it is its atmosphere.

All things are good, but in their place; and the more a thing is good for, the better defined is its place. An animalcule swims in all waters, breathes in all airs; but a Caucasian is for the temperate zone, a Shakspere is for London. Set friendship very high in your life, but expect from it the high work of friendship; do not require it to run the whole establishment.

MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR ONE'S FRIENDS

CHAPTER III

ONE of the fine ways in which friendship doubles one's possiblities and capacities is the way in which true friends will make allowances for each other.

At first sight this would seem to diminish and enfeeble our characters. It would seem to be an acquiescence in faults, a weak complacency. "Love is blind," runs the common saying; and blindness does not enrich life.

Rather, in the opinion of some, a man's friends should be strict with him. They should prove their friendship by pointing out his faults unsparingly. They should hold him severely to his very best. They should, of course, never fool him with flattery; and also they should take care that he sees himself "as ithers see" him. They

should treat him as a stern horticulturist treats a choice plant, pruning it unmercifully, that it may blossom abundantly.

All of this sounds very lofty, but also very forbidding. In contrast with it the suggestion that one should make many allowances for one's friends, though it has an ignoble air, is yet decidedly comforting.

We so long to have allowances made for us. "I didn't mean to!" we cry despairingly to ourselves after some folly. "I hate it, I hate it, and yet I do it in spite of myself," we lament when for the seventieth time we have yielded to some temptation and fallen into sin Indeed, the great comfort of the thought of God is the knowledge that he knows; not that he knows our baseness, even all that is hidden from the world, but that he knows our good intentions, our heart purposes, the ideals toward which we are striving.

Is not this to be also the great comfort of friendship? It is one secret of the power of those beautiful friends, our mothers. They love us so deeply that they dare to make allowances for us; and by making allowances for us they often lift us into a nobility for which they no longer need to make allowances. They are close enough to their children to see their half-ashamed struggles toward the right. They have watched their children so intently that they can read beneath the palimpsest of their lives, beneath the naughtiness that is all the neighbor sees, and easily decipher the better qualities that the neighbor does not guess. And friends should possess this lovely motherliness.

Such an insight is born of affection. No falser proverb ever was coined than that just quoted, "Love is blind." Love seems to be blind only because all the rest of the world is blind, and the

lover alone sees. Love is the Röntgen ray of the spiritual world. Where others see actions, love sees motives. Where others see results, the meager, unworthy, often shameful results, love sees conditions, compensations, desires, and is compelled, even if it did not wish, to make allowances.

One of the reasons also why a friend can make allowances for his friend is because friendship has shown him not only the friend but himself. No one can come to know another thoroughly without entering into a more thorough knowledge of himself. We all are, beneath an infinity of exterior differences, essentially alike. Friends feel keenly their friends' shortcomings, and the feeling renders their consciences sensitive to what is remiss in their own lives The very impulse of love to make allowances for the loved one throws us back upon self-scrutiny. "Who am I," we readily learn to say,

"that I should set myself up as a judge over my friend?"

Thus it often happens that a friend, while most eager to make allowances for a friend's error, is most severe with any tendency toward that error in himself. "I must not lead my friend astray," he says, "by any failure of a good example. I must not render his struggle harder, but easier." Here is the purifying power of love at work most effectively.

Will the time ever come when a friend should cease to make allowances for a friend? Will it not often happen that in loyalty to friendship we must be strict and even severe with our friends? If the fault is continued, is not continued leniency a false kindness? Should we not be truer to friendship if we take our friends to task, deal sternly with them, and in the close intimacy possible to us compel them to do the right?

Yes, if right doing could be com-

pelled! No, if right doing must spring from love of right doing!

I know a drunkard who was redeemed from his drunkenness solely, so far as I can learn, because he had a friend who believed in him, and insisted upon believing in him after all others had given him up. The friend did not scold or upbraid or lecture; he was only terribly grieved, and he kept on loving and praying and helping. He kept on remembering his own sins, and preserving his heart in tenderness toward the sins of his brother. Forgiving and forgetting and trusting made a man of his friend.

Friendship is not a mutual admiration club, but a mutual appreciation club, a mutual forbearance club, a mutual helpfulness club. Friendship does not insanely close its eyes to perils. If our friend is on the brink of a precipice it does not calmly assure him that he is in a safe meadow. But

neither does it stand aloof with a megaphone and shout a warning and a command. It throws an arm around him and lovingly draws him back to safety.

GIVING ONESELF TO FRIENDSHIP

CHAPTER IV

IN the second chapter we considered the independence that marks friendship at its best. But while friends are so sure of each other that they are quite absolved from slavish attendance upon set words and the balancing of services, this is not to lessen in any degree the absolute surrender that friendship requires. Indeed, the closest friendship, that of marriage, while it admits of the utmost freedom from restraint, formality, and convention, is yet based upon the complete giving of the one to the other —goods, time, strength, thought and affection.

This is perhaps the chief gain from friendship, that it demands of us an entire yielding of ourselves to its sacred cause. What a bath is to the body,

for cleansing and quickening, that to the soul is the sinking of oneself in a noble emotion, a generous enterprise. It washes all the meanness out of our spirits. It stimulates us out of our sluggishness. It sets the nerves of our souls to tingling gloriously. Like a plunge in the ocean, it puts us a-swing with the waves of infinity.

Life is beautiful and splendid just in proportion as it goes forth beautifully and splendidly into other lives. This is not to adopt the canons of worldly success. According to those mean standards a life is resplendent if other lives—many other lives—humbly bring tribute to it, of money or praise or service; not if it is friendly, but if the world is friendly to it. Success, measured by a worldling's yardstick, has no room in all its palace for a single friend.

Thus friendship is the best preparation for heaven, where worldly standards

are reversed, and success is in giving, not getting. Whoever has yielded his life on earth to an honest and thorough friendship has served a satisfactory apprenticeship to the life everlasting.

We are inclined in America and in this modern age to be too busy for friendship. Friendship is one of the things we are postponing to the mythical time when we shall have made our fortune and retired. It is in the list with books, and music, and travel, and recreation; yes, and too often prayer and the Bible and thoughtful meditation are in the same list. Some day—by and by—when we have earned our leisure!

No one has a right view of friendship till he has placed it by the side of whatever he calls his business. Friendship is a business as important as any other can be, more important than most callings are. By it we get, not our bread and butter, but our higher

and equally necessary nutriment. Its wages are paid, not in earth's perishable gold, but in notes on the bank of heaven, bearing interest that would make any usurer envious. No one is a man of business till he is a friend.

No one makes a success of his secular business till he gives himself to it. He must forget the clock in business hours. He must carry his business with him. He must dream of it at night. He must see it in the trees and the clouds. He must turn his conversations toward it. He must lavish upon it his time and all his powers. No business success is won on any other terms.

Nor is it in the least different with this supreme business of friendship. Conducted with less intensity, it will go into bankruptcy. True friends heed not the passage of time when they are together, and dream of each other when they are apart. Instinctively their thoughts turn to each other. They

constantly plan each other's advantage and they count nothing too good for each other. They give themselves to their friendship, and only wish themselves enlarged that they may have more to give.

It is this generosity of spirit, this liberalizing of the soul, and not a spacious house and an overflowing exchequer, that renders a man or a woman affluent. You may be cooped up in three small rooms, and yet inhabit a superb palace of friendship. You may need to count every penny, and yet be a millionaire of friendship. Your view may be bounded by a brick wall ten feet away, and yet your soul may live on a mountain top with your friend, and the most magnificent of all scenes may be spread before you at each sunrise.

Not in a minute is this surrender to friendship made by any man, even the most impulsive. Love at first sight is

only the first draft of love; the outline must be filled in patiently, with long time and toil. Friendship must be learned, like any other art.

You will fail in self-surrender many times at first. You will quite forget to give yourself, but will crudely demand that your friend shall give himself or herself. You will be too occupied with other interests, or too careless, or too stupid. You will become piqued. You will misunderstand. You will give half of yourself, and the other half will call after it and summon it back.

But be patient. And then still more patient. Friendship is like swimming: yield yourself wholly to the liquid element, and it will buoy you up; fear it, struggle against it, surrender to it only partially, and you sink. Sometimes boys are taught to swim by the heroic expedient of throwing them into the water where it is beyond their depth. Sometimes Providence teaches us

friendship by throwing us headlong into the deep waters of affliction. More often the art comes a little at a time.

But when it comes, what happiness it brings!

THE PRICELESS REWARDS OF FRIENDSHIP

CHAPTER V

THE selfish man cannot see how association with other men, and especially the giving of himself to other men, can be anything but a deteriorating and losing experience. With him, $1+1=1/2$. With him, the only way to increase is by multiplication: $1\times4=4$. He will multiply his information, put his money out at interest, build more barns. He has never learned the spiritual arithmetic.

When we say that "all the world loves a lover," we must omit selfish men. They have nothing in common with lovers, mothers, friends and martyrs. Their selfishness has so seared their understanding that they cannot see what to all the world besides is beautifully clear.

For there is no mystery about the

rewards of friendship. The gains of learning are abstruse to the ignorant man; the joy of a new trilobite is folly to him, and he sneers at spectroscopes and libraries. The delight of accuracy and dexterity is hidden from the careless man; he has no conception of the pleasure of perfect parallels and neatly fashioned joints. The happiness of vigor is concealed from the sluggish; he sneers at your Indian clubs and punching bags and canoes. But the lonely man, the unfriended man, has no question of the value of friendship, and gazes with keen longing after those that go two and two. He understands without experiencing it the ineffable gain of a friend.

The rewards of friendship extend far into the worldly and material sphere of life, though they do not begin there. Men do not really go far in worldly success very often unless they are friendly men. The danger of the cor-

rupt politician is his incongruous friendships; he finds time gladly to minister to the sick, push young men into good positions, chat with the lonely. The danger of "big finance" is its friendships; legally disintegrate a monster trust and the component directors will manage to pull together very well with a mere friendly understanding. The urbanity of the successful drummer goes beneath the surface, or it would win no customer. The large colleges receive thousands of ambitious students because it is recognized that college friendships are a powerful factor in graduate successes. The value of many a man to a business firm is not his sagacity or money or skill, but entirely his ability to make friends and keep them. Lonely men seldom get far in this world.

And neither do they get far toward the next world. For if the advantages of friendship in promoting material prosperity are many and patent, even

more numerous and manifest are its spiritual gains.

One of the chief of these blessings is the frankness of friendship. Friendship is the universal confessional. Burdens hidden from all the rest of the world are disclosed to a friend, and that very disclosure halves them. Griefs are shown that no one else suspects. Sins are revealed that would horrify acquaintances; but friends are strong to know, and mighty to forgive. Perplexities are discussed, doubts are confessed, faults are exhibited, and friendship has wisdom and faith and patience for them all.

I do not mean that there is no privacy in friendship. Friendship would be horrible if that were true. Indeed, friends are most scrupulous in heeding each other's reserve, and trust each other as much in what they do not say as in what they tell. It is only a half-way friend that demands confidences,

or even desires them. But friendship is precious in its opportunity for them.

But the ceaseless joy of friendship is its quiet, steady support. Here is a sure anchorage, though the storms tear us from all others. Here is one who cannot fail us, though all others prove traitors. Here is one heart always open to us, one hand always stretched out toward us. Even if we never are obliged to use it, the knowledge that such a strengthening is possible for us gives us a surer footing, a stouter bearing, a merrier song on all our ways.

This accounts for the friendships that the world calls ill assorted. It has proved unnecessary that the scholar's friend shall be a scholar; or the artist's, a student of art; or the rich man's, a man of affairs; that authors shall marry blue-stockings and singers mate with musicians. These exterior likings are well to be had, but they are nothing to the inner fact of friendship.

As we grow older, no truth of life so impresses itself upon us as the essential isolation of souls. Thousands of acquaintances, but no one known! Continual intercourse, but no life touched! It is among human beings as physicists say it is among atoms: millions of them in a pebble, yet each in a separate orbit. Whelmed in crowds, buried in engagements, distracted with meetings, deafened with talk, we cry out in a wilderness of loneliness, and search the empty horizon for a comrade soul.

But there is no desert if a friend is by our side! At once society becomes meaningful, and tasks become vital, and life becomes interesting and worth while. At once the brazen sky softens into blue, and sands blossom with roses.

These are priceless rewards, because they cannot be estimated. No imperial budget is large enough to contain them. No Crœsus has gold enough to

buy them. No Napoleon has generalship to conquer them. They are the free gifts of love. They are to be had for the asking and the taking, and on no other terms. They are the only things in all the world that are the more valuable because they must be given away.

Ah, but no careless asking will suffice! Spotless must be the hands reached out for this gift, and beautiful the heart that can receive it. The reward is without price, but not without high deserving.

THE FRIENDSHIP THAT SURPASSES ALL

CHAPTER VI

THE beloved Dr. J. R. Miller used to say, for many years before his death, as his statement of his personal religion, "Jesus and I are friends." Dr. Miller knew well the noblest friendship with men; he exemplified all that has been said about it in these chapters. He could not have done that if he had not known well the friendship that surpasses all friendship with men.

Here our arithmetic fails ignominiously. If the greatening that comes from human friendship is expressed by 1+1=4, what equation can represent the results of the divine friendship? When the second 1 means the Lord Jesus Christ, 1+1=infinity.

Other things also that have been said of human friendships fail to apply

here. We need to make no allowances for our divine Friend, though, alas! he needs to make many allowances for us. There is no fault or flaw to pardon in him. He never disappoints, or falls short. Nor are there limitations in this friendship with Jesus Christ. No duties can conflict with it. No joys can enter counter claims. No other friendships can make distracting demands upon us. Our supreme friendship interpenetrates all other friendships and pleasures and duties. It not only does not withdraw us from them; it gives them their chief significance and attractiveness.

"Ye are my friends," said Jesus to his disciples, "if ye do the things which I command you." Obedience is the factory of the divine friendship. It is a factory in which we do not work alone, but the Friend who requires the obedience works with us, teaching us how to obey, giving us power to obey. We

could never, unaided, do whatsoever he commands us.

If, as we have found, we must give ourselves in whole-hearted surrender to an earthly friendship, surely no less is required for this heavenly friendship. But how often we try to enter into friendship with Jesus Christ while yielding him paltry fragments of time and money and strength and thought whose niggardliness would drive us from the purlieus of any human friendship! How often, by the evidence of our acts, we hold the surpassing Friend as of less value than our friendship for the creatures he has made!

The conditions of the divine friendship are strikingly and comfortingly like the conditions of our human friendships.

Time. If obedience is friendship with Jesus, we can put ourselves under his authority in an instant, merely with a sincere "Yes"; but years are required

fully to learn his will for us, that we may obey it.

Talk. We cannot know Jesus, any more than we can know a human friend, until we have talked with him, and heard him talk with us, on many subjects and for long periods and very familiarly. Prayer is the language of the divine friendship, and we must learn to speak it instinctively.

Thought. No one can talk his way into a friendship; he must think his way into it. The reason why our friendships are often so shallow is because they are not rooted in meditation.

Feeling. Dr. Trumbull called friendship "The Master Passion." With what passionate devotion and desire, then, should we seek the supreme friendship! To approach it coldly, in a matter-of-fact way, is never to find it. "Because thou art lukewarm,... I will spew thee out of my mouth."

If the young man and the young

woman will pursue the divine friendship with the same ardor with which they serve their mutual love, they will find a love which will enrich their earthly love beyond all reckoning. If husband and wife will cultivate the heavenly alliance as assiduously as they strive to perfect their earthly marriage, they will for the first time learn what married joys can be. If David and Jonathan will bestow upon their Elder Brother the same affection and devotion which they bestow upon each other, they will exult in a new friendship for each other, dearer and stronger than any they have ever imagined.

The rewards of the divine friendship exceed those of human friendships infinitely in degree, as God infinitely exceeds man; but they do not differ in kind.

To know that One understands us perfectly, comprehends our ideals, sees

our best impulses, reads our secret struggles against temptation, knows our falls but also all our resistances:

To be sure that if our earthly brother leaves us, we have a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother; that even if our best friends, our father and mother, forsake us, our heavenly Friend will take us up:

To estimate the wealth of this Friend, and find it incalculable; to sound his wisdom, and find it unsearchable; to test his strength, and find it adequate to any task and mightier than any foe:

In every perplexity to discover this Friend at our side; in every loneliness to meet him; in every sorrow to feel his arm around us:

For all the endless future, for all the unguessed worlds, to predicate our Friend; to know that he who has led us through the earth mazes will conduct us to the many mansions, and will introduce us to the eternal life:

All this is the high privilege of the friends of Jesus Christ. It is not a myth or a metaphor. It is not a vision and a prophecy. It is a present, hourly, substantial joy.

As our human friendship is the climax of our mortal life, this divine friendship is the perpetual climax of the life everlasting.

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